

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-05 DODE-00 PM-03

NSC-05 NSCE-00 PRS-01 IO-03 NEAE-00 DHA-02 /043 W

----- 122380

P 230420Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9511

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA PRIORITY

S E C R E T DACCA 0425

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BG, IN

SUBJECT: NEW ROUND OF TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH

1. SUMMARY: THERE HAS BEEN A NEW INCREASE IN TENSION BETWEEN INDIA AND BANGLADESH ACCORDING TO FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY HAS DESCRIBED TO ME RAIDS ALLEGEDLY CARRIED OUT ACROSS THE BORDER BY "MISCREANTS" THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 19-20 AND INFORMED US THAT HE HAS CALLED UPON THE INDIANS TO BREAK OFF THIS ACTIVITY IN ORDER TO AVOID THE DANGER OF IT BECOMING INTERNATIONALIZED. FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE WANTED US TO BE INFORMED OF THIS ACTIVITY BUT MADE NO FURTHER REQUEST OF US. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE END OF A MEETING AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY ARRANGED LAST EVENING TO INTRODUCE ASSISTANT AID ADMINISTRATOR GARDINER, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY ASKED ME TO STAY BEHIND IN ORDER TO INVITE OUR ATTENTION TO RAIDS ON BORDER POSTS CARRIED OUT ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 19-20 AND TO GIVE ME A COPY OF THE PAPER DESCRIBING THESE RAIDS WHICH HE HAD HANDED TO INDIAN DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER DAS EARLIER IN THE DAY. TEXT OF THE PAPER IS AS FOLLOWS:

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QTE 1. IN THE MYMENSINGH-INDIA BORDER MISCREANTS
NUMBERING 1500 CROSSED INTO BANGLADESH TERRITORY AND
ATTACKED AREAS UNDER TWO THANAS (POLICE STATIONS).

QTE 2. OUR FOLLOWING BORDER OUT POSTS WERE CONTINUOUSLY
FIRED UPON
FROM ACROSS THE BORDER DURING THE TIME OF
ATTACK, I.E. NIGHT OF 19/20 JAN 76:

A. CHAURAPARA	2000 YDS
B. BIJOYPUR	500 YDS FROM BORDER
C. BAROMARI	1200 YDS FROM BORDER
D. LENGURA	3000 YDS
E. KHARNAI	800 YDS
F. BARUWKONA	1200 YDS
G. PANCHGAON	1000 YDS

QTE 3. OUR PANCHGAON BOP HAVE BEEN SURROUNDED BY
MISCREANTS (WHO CAME BY BSF (BORDER SECURITY FORCE) TRUCKS,
GOT OFF LOADED AND THEN SURROUNDED THE BOP) SINCE 0300 HRS
20 JAN 76.

QTE 4. OUR BOP AT BAROMARI (WHICH IS 1200 YDS FROM
BORDER WAS ATTACKED BY MISCREANTS WHO CAME ACROSS THE
BORDER IN BROAD DAY LIGHT AT 4 PM ON 21 JAN 76
AND CAPTURED THE BOP. IN THIS CLASH TWO BDR SEPOYS
WERE KILLED AND 12 BDR ANSARS (VILLAGE POLICEMEN) ARE
MISSING. TWO PRIVATES WHO ESCAPED THE ONSLAUGHT
NARRATED THE STORY OF THE ATTACK ON BAROMARI BOP.
THEY EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT MISCREANTS HAD AT LEAST
25 PERCENT OF BSF PERSONNEL WITH THEM. INCIDENTALLY
THEY WERE PUTTING ON KHAKI DRESS.

QTE 5. OUR BIJOYPUR BOP WHICH IS ONLY 500 YDS AWAY
FROM BORDER WAS HEAVILY FIRED UPON. THIS INCIDENT
OCCURRED AT 10 PM ON 21 JAN 76.

QTE 6. FIRING ON OUR BOP IS STILL CONTINUING AND
MASSING OF MISCREANTS ON THE BORDER CAN BE EASILY SEEN
FROM DURGAPUR.

QTE 7. MISCREANTS ARE EQUIPPED KATH G 3 RIFLE,
M 26 A HAND GRENADE AND ALL AMMUNITION MARKED WITH
PAKISTAN ORDANCE FACTORY MARKING. END QTE.

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3. ASSISTED BY AIR COMMODORE ISLAM, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY
SHOWED ME LOCATIONS OF ABOVE BORDER POSTS ON BANGLADESH
MAP. THEY EXPLAINED AS BACKGROUND THAT OVER THE LAST TWO
OR THREE WEEKS SPORADIC FIRING HAD BEEN ENCOUNTERED ON
THE WESTERN END OF THE MYMENSINGH FRONTIER AREA. DURING
THIS SAME PERIOD, THEY HAD OBSERVED TRAINING GOING ON IN
VARIOUS PLACES ACROSS THE INDIAN BORDER, INVOLVING AN
ESTIMATED 2,000 TRAINEES. THE RAIDS ON JANUARY 19-20

HOWEVER, REPRESENTED A NEW DIMENSION IN THIS ACTIVITY, THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID. THEY SAID THAT SPORADIC FIRING WAS STILL GOING ON AT NEARLY ALL THE BORDER POSTS BUT THEY EXPECTED THAT THE CAPTURED BORDER POST AT BAROMARI WOULD BE RETAKEN BY TODAY. THEY ALSO SAID THAT THE OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE POLICE STATION AT KALUMAKANDA HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED ON THE NIGHT OF JANUARY 20 AND TAKEN TO INDIA. THEY SAID THAT BDG WAS NOT MOVING TROOPS INTO THE AFFECTED AREA FOR FEAR OF CREATING PANIC AMONG THE POPULATION WHICH MIGHT STIMULATE A FLOW OF REFUGEES INTO INDIA AND MIGHT THEN SERVE AS THE PRETEXT FOR A COUNTER ACTION BY INDIA.

4. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID HE HAD TOLD DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER DAS (WHO HAD BEEN CALLED IN BECAUSE THE HIGH COMMISSIONER WAS STILL NOT FULLY ACTIVE) THAT THESE ACTIVITIES WERE CONTRARY TO THE ASSURANCES WHICH THE SATTAR DELEGATION HAD RECEIVED DURING ITS DISCUSSIONS IN INDIA AND CONTRARY TO BANGLADESH'S DESIRE FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA. THE FOREIGN SECRETARY SAID THAT HE ASKED DAS THAT THE INCIDENTS BE HALTED TO AVOID THE DANGER THAT THEY MIGHT GROW AND BECOME INTERNATIONALIZED. HE SAID THAT HE WANTED US TO KNOW OF THIS ACTIVITY AND TO KNOW OF THE BANGLADESH GOVERNMENT'S EAGERNESS TO PRESERVE PEACE. I THANKED THE FOREIGN SECRETARY AND SAID I HOPED THAT HIS DISCUSSION WITH THE INDIANS WOULD DAMPEN DOWN THE SITUATION.

5. COMMENT: BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER SMALLMAN HAD TOLD ME AT NOON YESTERDAY THAT GENERAL ZIA, DURING SMALLMAN'S AND VISITING BRITISH DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE CORTAZZI'S CALL ON PRESIDENT SAYEM, GENERAL ZIA, COMMODORE KHAN AND FOREIGN SECRETARY JANUARY 21, HAD REFERRED TO CONTINUING INDIAN "PIN-PRICKS" ALONG THE
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BORDER AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT BANGLADESH'S FRIENDS SHOULD PERSUADE THE INDIANS TO STOP SUCH ACTIVITY. SMALLMAN AND CORTAZZI REPLIED TO THE EFFECT THAT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED IN LECTURING EITHER OF THE TWO SIDES BUT DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT, IN THE INTEREST OF STABILITY AND A REDUCTION OF TENSION, THEY WOULD REPORT IN ONE CAPITAL WHAT THEY HAD LEARNED IN THE OTHER. CORTAZZI MENTIONED TO ZIA, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT DURING HIS CONVERSATIONS WITH SENIOR INDIAN OFFICIALS IN CALCUTTA PRIOR TO ARRIVING IN DACCA,, HE HAD FOUND THESE OFFICIALS RELATIVELY RELAXED ABOUT THE SITUATION. SMALLMAN SAID THERE WAS NO IMPLICATION OF A REQUEST FOR GOOD OFFICES OR MEDIATION IN GENERAL ZIA'S COMMENTS.

6. THE ACTIVITY DESCRIBED BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARY IS

OBVIOUSLY RELATED TO THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR MISSION
PERSONNEL WHO WERE MET BY A RECEPTION COMMITTEE AT DURGAPUR
WHEN THEY LANDED BY HELICOPTER FOR A VISIT ON JANUARY 21 AND
TOLD TO LEAVE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF AN ARMED
ATTACK IN THE AREA THE NIGHT BEFORE (DACCA'S 0392).
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